

THE LADY AND THE PIRATE

BY
EMERSON HOUGH

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(Continued.)

"All horses can run away, all auto cars can blow up, all boats can sink. But we have as good charts and compasses as the Mauretania and in three hours—"

"But much can happen in three hours."

"Much has happened in less time. It did not take me so long as that to love you, Helena, and that I have not forgotten in more than five years—five years, Helena. And, as to shipwreck, what does one more matter? It is you who have made shipwreck of a man's life. Take shame for that."

"Take shame yourself to talk in this way to me, when I am helpless, when I can't get away, when I'm troubled and frightened half to death!" She sobbed, choking a little, but her head high. "Let me out! I'm going to Auntie Lucinda. I hate you more and more. If I were to drown I'd not take a bit from you."

"Do you mean that, Helena?" I asked, more than the chill of the north in my blood.

"Yes, I mean it. You are a coward!" I stood for quite a time between her and the companion stair, my hand still offering aid as she swayed in the boat's roll now. I was thinking, and I was very sad.

"Helena," said I, "perhaps you have won. That's a hard word to take from man or woman. If it is in any way true you have won and I have lost and deserved to lose. But now, since little else remains, let me arrange matters as simply as I can. I'll admit there's an element of risk in our situation. One screw is out of commission, and one engine might be better. If we missed the channel west to the shoals we might go aground. I hope not. Whether we do or not, I want to tell you over yonder, forty or fifty miles, is the channel running inland, which was my objective point all along. I know this coast in the dark like a book. Now, I promise you I'll take you in there to friends of mine, people of your own class, and no one shall suspect one jot of all this other than that we were driven out of our course. And once there you are free. You never will see my face again. I will do this as a ship's man for you and if need comes will give my life to keep you safe. It's about all a coward can do for you. Now go, and if any time of need comes for me to call you you will be called. And you will be cared for by the ship's men. And because I am head of the ship's men you will do as I say. But I hope no need for this will come. Yonder is our course where the heads now, and soon you will be free from me. You have wrecked me. Now I am derelict from this time on. Goodby!"

I heard footfalls above. "Mrs. Danvers' compliments to Captain Black Bart," saluted L'Olonnois, "and would he send my Auntie Helena back because she's sick?"

"Take good care of your Auntie Helena, Jimmy," said I, "and help her get along the rail."

I followed up the companionway and saw her going slowly, head down, her coat of lace blown wide, her hand at her throat and sobbing in what Jimmy and I both knew was fear of the storm.

"Have they got everything they need there, Jimmy?" I asked as she returned.

"Sure! And the old girl's going to have a peach of a one this time. She can't hardly rock in a rocking chair 'thout getting seasick. I think it's great, don't you? Look at her back into 'em!"

Jimmy and his friend shared this immunity from mal de mer. I could see them now, leaning down over the rail, and the deck boy, Willy, in his hurried work about the boat. Williams I could not see. But Peterson was now calm and much in his element, for a better shipper than he never sailed a craft on the great lakes.

"I think she's going to blow great guns," said he, "and like enough the other captain will be in for it."

"Yes!" I answered, stepping to the wheel. "In which case we go to Davy Jones about when, Peterson?"

"We don't go," he rejoined. "She's the grandest little ship afloat and not a thing's the matter with her."

"Can we make the channel and run inside the long key below the Cote Blanche Bayou?"

"Sure we can. You'd better get the covers off the boats and see the bottom plugs in and some water and supplies shipped aboard—but there's not the slightest danger in the world for this boat, let me tell you that, sir. I've seen her perform before now, and there's not a storm can blow on this coast she won't ride through."

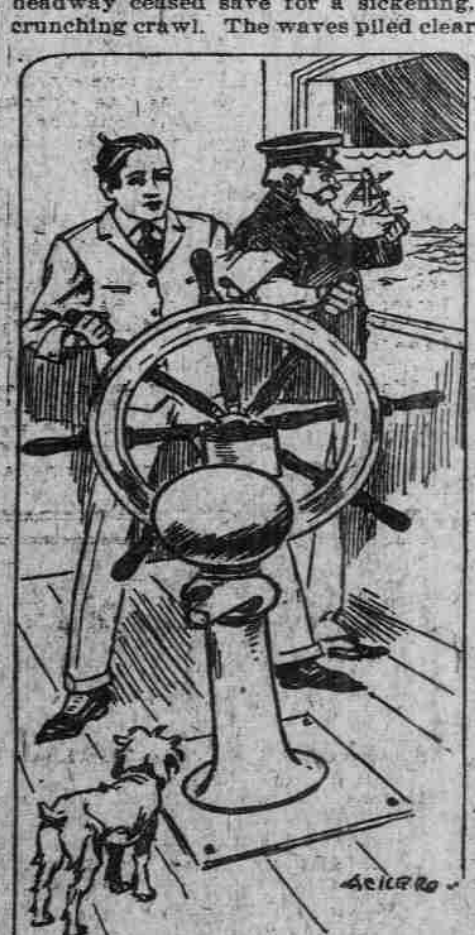
CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THERE IS SHIPWRECK. I MIGHT have made some confession of my own, had I liked, for I did not in the least fancy the look of things.

"We'll crawl on in," said Peterson. "The light can't be a thousand miles from here. If only there was a nigger man and a dinner bell beside the light—that's the trouble. And now—good God! There she goes!"

With a far that shook the good boat to the core, we felt the bottom come from the depths and smite us. Our

headway ceased save for a sickening, crunching crawl. The waves piled clear



"And now—good God! There she goes!"

across our port bow as we swung. And so we hung, the guilting in on us in our yellow rimmed world. And at the lift and hollow of the sea we rose and pounded sullenly down in such fashion as would have broken the back of any boat less staunch than ours.

Here in an eye's flash was danger tangible and real. I heard a shriek from the cabin aft, and called out for them all to keep below and keep the ports closed. Peterson had the power off in an instant and swung her head as best he could with the dying headway. But it only put her farther on the shoal.

"It's the Timballer shoals!" he screamed.

Jean Lafitte came bounding up the companionway. "Come," said I quickly, "help me with the anchor." A moment later we sprang the capstan clutch, and I heard the brief groan of the anchor chain as the big hook ran free. Glad enough I was to think of the extra size it had. We eased her down and made fast under Peterson's orders now and so swung into the head of the sea, which mercilessly lifted us and flung us down like a monkey seeking to crack a coconuts shell. Williams joined us now, and Willie and John, pale as Jean Lafitte, came up from the forecastle, all shouting and jabbering. I ran aft as soon as might be and only pulled up at the cabin door to summon such air of calm as I might. I rapped, but followed in, not waiting. Helena met me, pale, her eyes wide, her hair disheveled, but none the less mistress of herself.

"What is it?" she demanded. "What makes it jolt?"

"We've gone aground," said I. "She does pound a little, doesn't she?" She looked out into the wild night, across which the voices of the confused wild fowl came like souls in torment.

"This is terrible!" said she simply. "Are we lost?"

"No," said I. "Let us hear no such talk. Go below now and keep quiet. We may pass the night here or we may conclude after a little to go on ahead a little farther. We've just dropped the anchor. The island's just over there a way." I did not care to be too specific.

I found the men trying to make soundings all about us as best they could with boat hooks and a spare spar. But it came to little.

"Peterson," said I, "you're ship's master. What are your orders?"

"Unlash the boat covers," said he. "Get even the dinghy ready. Williams, close your hatch and bear a hand to swing the big boat out in her davits. Set the bottom plugs in well. And Mr. Harry, you and John, the Chink, had better get some stores and a case or so of bottled water aboard the longboat. Have you got the silckers and rugs ready and plenty of clothes? We'll just be ready if it happens. I don't know where that light or the channel is, but the ducks may know where something is. We'll run for them if we can't ride her out."

Peterson stood looking ahead, but was anxious. "She's coming up stronger," said he, "and two points on the port quarter. We're going on harder all the time. Anchor's dragging. Afraid we're going to lose her, Mr. Harry."

"Hush!" said I, nodding to the boy. "And turn on the searchlight. It seems to me I hear breakers in there."

"That's so," said the old man. "Hook on the light's battery, Williams, and let's see what we can see."

The strong beam, wavering from side to side, plowed a furry path into the fog. It disclosed at first only the succession of angry incoming waves, such as it passed thudding us down on the bar of shell and mud and slime. But at last off to starboard and well astern in our new position, riding at anchor, we raised a faint white line of broken water which seemed a constant feature and now and then caught the low boom of the surf.

"She ain't a half mile over yonder," I heard Willy, the deck hand, say. "An' we could almost walk it if it wasn't for the sea."

"Yes, sir," said Williams, "we'd do fine in there now with them boats. When we hit the white water—"

"Shut up!" ordered Peterson. "Safe as a church here or there, you lubbers. Stand by your tackle and keep your chin. Mr. Harry, tell the ladies just to wrap up a bit because—well, maybe because—"

"Call me when it is time, Peterson," said I, and moved aft, holding Jean Lafitte by the arm.

"Geel!" said he as he dropped, wet and out of breath, into the cabin. And "Geel!" remarked a very pale L'Olonnois in return, gamely as he could. And Mrs. Danvers' moans went rhythmic with the pound of the keel on the shoals.

"What shall we do?" asked Helena at last calmly. "Auntie is very sick. I am beginning to fear for her, it is such a bad attack. This is as rough as I ever saw it on the channel."

"There is no danger," said I, "but Peterson and I just thought that if she kept on pounding in this way it might be better to go ashore."

I spoke lightly, but well enough I knew the risk of trying to launch a boat in such a sea, and what the surf might be none could say.

Silently I motioned to Willy, the deck hand, to bring me the life preservers. "Put them on," I said to Helena.

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" moaned the older woman. "I'm dying—let me alone."

"Stop this nonsense, madam," said I sternly, "knowing that was the only way. 'Put it on' at once. You, too, Mrs. Danvers, and you, my boys. Quick! Then throw on loose wraps—all you can. It will be cold."

In spite of all my efforts to seem calm the air of panic ran swiftly. Mrs. Danvers awoke to swift action as she tremblingly fastened the belt about her. Pushing past me, she reached the deck, and so mad was she that in all likelihood she would have sprung overboard. I caught at her, and though my clutch brought away little more than a handful of false hair it seemed to restore her reason, though it destroyed her coiffure. "Enough of this!" I cried to her. "Take your place by the boat and do as you are told. And I saw Helena pass forward, also, as we all reached the deck, herself pale as a wraith, but with no outcry and no spoken word. So at last I ranged them all near the boat that swung ready at the davits.

"We can't all get in that," said Jean Lafitte.

"No," said I, and I did not like to look at the tiny dinghy which lay on the cabin top, squat and tublike, or the small ducking skiff that here on deck was half full of water from the breaking seas.

"Peterson," said I, "take charge of the big boat here. Take Williams to run her motor for you. And the ladies will go with you."

I turned to the two boys, and my heart leaped in pride for them both, for when I motioned to Jimmy to make ready for the larger boat, with the ladies, he stepped back, pale as he was. "Not unless John goes, too," said he. And they stood side by side, simply and with no outcry, their young faces grave.

"He must go with us—Jimmy," broke out Helena yearningly, "and so must you."

"Shut up, Auntie," exclaimed Jimmy most irreverently. "Who's a running this boat I'd like to know?" Which abashed his auntie very much.

"We'll take this one," said Jean Lafitte, and already was tipping the duck boat. "It'll carry us three if it has to." And I allowed him and his mate to stand by, not daring to look at his inadequate shell and again at the breaking seas.

That left the dinghy for Willy and the cook. I glanced at Willy. "What would you rather chance?" I asked him, "the dinghy or the duck boat?"

"The dinghy," said he quickly, and we both knew the corklike quality of this stubby craft.

"Very well," said I. "Call John when the word comes to go."

"Aren't you going with us?" asked Helena now, suddenly, approaching me. I took one long look into her eyes, then "Obey orders" was all I said and pointed to the larger boat. I said goodby to her then. And in the swift intuitive justice that comes to us in moments of extremity, I passed sentence upon these young boys and myself. Though they had sinned in innocence, though I had sinned in love, it had been our folly that had brought these boys into this peril, and our chance must be the least. Peterson and Williams would be a better team in the big boat than any other we could afford. I saw Peterson step toward us and divined what was in his mind. "I'm owner of this boat, my man," said I. "Go to your duty. You're needed in the big boat."

"I'm last to leave her," whispered the old man. "She's my boat and I've run her."

"Peterson," said I, taking him aside, "I'll buy us another boat, but there is no woman on earth, nor ever will be, like that one yonder. Save her. It is your first duty. I wanted that for myself, but she thinks I'm a coward, and I would be if I arranged our crews any other way than just as we are. Take your boat through. We others will do the best we can. And give the word for the boats when you're sure we can't ride it out."

(To Be Continued.)

The boys are practicing along the lines of preparedness and good marksmanship by plugging green fruit at the shed windows of the neighborhood.

SPECIAL SALE OF

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Bits of Byplay

By Luke McLuke

Copyright, 1915, the Cincinnati Enquirer

Fouis, Fouis! There was an old tad in St. Louis Who was known as a regular rouls. For mo' every night He'd go out and get tight, And then he'd fill up on chop souls.

Police! The Red Tie club, composed of well known German citizens living in the southeastern section of the city, was formed many years ago. Each member was to wear a red tie and never wear anything else.—Louisville Times.

Oh! He beats his wife most every night, Yet she does not look glum; She doesn't seem to mind her plight, He beats her playing rum.

Is That So! Dear Luke—Why don't you come up into the country and see some real corn feds. Judging by the amount of beer consumed in the city you have never seen anything but sloop feds.—A Wapakoneta Corn Fed.

Huh! Our language is so queer. Gee, whist! If often causes mirth: The thing we call a bigot is The smallest thing on earth.

Where Is He? About twenty-seven of Luke's readers have located the old fashioned man who plays the accordion. Good. But what has become of the nice young man who used to play the mandolin?

High Bawls. The tenor has singing, etc. The boozie made his voice wheeze; And then the barkeep said: "Hey, you! Cut out those high balls, please!"

Most of Them Do, Bill. The old home newspaper is just like a letter from home, and nothing can take its place in the way of giving the kind of information that is desired by the wanderer. However, it is not at all likely that any Kentuckian ever became so greatly attached to Cincinnati that he'd ever care to hear from it again. If he did he would be taking the big sheet on which Luke McLuke is employed.—Wapakoneta (O.) News.

Paw Knows Everything. Willie—Paw, does vaccination keep people from taking things? Paw—I guess so, my son. But I never heard of it curing kleptomaniacs.

Search Me! Dear Luke—Is Twinsburg, O., the first this side of Triplesville?—Traveling Admire.

Well, What's the Difference? County Clerk Hutson issued two marriage licenses Saturday. None was issued on Friday, that being hangman's day.—West Union (W. Va.) Record.

The Wise Fool. "Dead men tell no tales," observed the sage. "Maybe not," replied the fool, "but their tombstones are awful liars."

Names Is Names. M. T. McCann lives at Hurricane, W. Va.

Things to Worry About. Ostriches are now hatched in incubators.

Our Daily Special. When you hit the bullseye don't go around beefing about it.

Luke McLuke Says: When a man and wife are out in public and the man falls all over himself trying to be attentive to the wife you can bet that she is some other man's wife.

After a man has been married for awhile he can call his wife "dear" and make it sound like an insinuation. As a rule, we spend the first half of our lives hunting for trouble and the second half dodging it.

No matter how low a man may sink in the scale of humanity, he can always find a dog that will love him and a woman who will marry him.

The reason why a man likes to have his wife repeat all the promises he made when he was courting her is because Jawm Dee Rockefeller always refuses dividends on his stocks.

Poor man is always up against it. He worries because he discovers that he is becoming bald and then finds out that nothing increases baldness so much as worry.

Any old time a husband and wife are of the same mind you won't have much trouble guessing whose mind it is. There are a lot of poor devils now living who will get to heaven when they die because if they were sent to the other place it would seem just like home.

Economy is a good trait. But no married man should pick up the hairpins he finds on the street and put them in his pocket.

Any man who has ever been seasick doesn't have much trouble believing that the whale wasn't doing anything wonderful in getting rid of Jonah.

Some people wonder why Solomon said "all men are liars" and didn't mention the women. That's easy. If you had 700 wives I'd dare you to start anything. Solomon was wise, all right. Any real woman will spend 25 cents to save a dime.

The Bank of England earmarked £100,000 for Egypt.

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Every person, firm or corporation, resident or non-resident, liable to taxation on real or personal property, in the Town of Stratford on September 1st, 1915, MUST FILE with the Board of Assessors, a sworn statement of all taxable property owned by such person, firm or corporation in the Town of Stratford on specially printed lists furnished by the Assessors. Such lists must be filed during the month of September, 1915. Failure to do so will compel the Assessors to make out such list from the best information obtainable, to which a penalty of ten percent will be added as by the law required. Each parcel of real estate must be described by metes and bounds, by street number or lot number; all buildings thereon must be entered separately from the land.

Failure to file a list deprives the owner of the right to appeal to the Board of Relief. Hours: 9 a. m. to 4 p. m. and from 7 p. m. to 8:30 p. m., commencing September 7th. BOARD OF ASSESSORS Stratford, Conn., August 28, 1915. L21 au 2 4 6

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